

# How To Set Boundaries with your Toxic Family Members



According to a recent study, toxic individuals can poison those around them. This can then lead to mental health issues like depression and anxiety. The likelihood of developing a substance abuse disorder as a means of self-medication rises if the current problems are not addressed or treated.

We frequently counsel our clients to break off relationships with toxic individuals. However, how do you handle toxic family members?

You can change your relationship with a toxic family member in ways that will allow it to continue without hurting you. When mental health professionals discuss setting boundaries, they are referring to this.

## Who is a Toxic Person?

We talk about toxic people informally, and the term is now widely used in popular psychology. When someone is described as “toxic,” most people mean that they don’t care about other people and try to control, manipulate, or harm those who care about them.

[Trained psychologists](#) are more likely to label “toxic” people as narcissists. An exaggerated sense of importance is a hallmark of narcissistic personality disorder, which shares many symptoms with “toxicity.”

An excessive need for attention and admiration characterises narcissistic personality disorder. They believe that their wants, needs, and concerns take precedence over those of others. Underlying all of this is a severe fear of being judged or criticised, and they frequently blame others for their shortcomings.

## **How to Spot Toxic Family Members**

Learn how to spot a toxic family member and establish boundaries that will enhance your life and your relationship with them by reading on.

To better understand what toxic behaviour looks like, let's discuss some of the ways toxic family members may act. By recognizing these behaviors, you can become more informed and aware, which is the first step towards establishing healthy boundaries.

For instance, they may try to influence your decisions or thoughts by criticizing actions that don't benefit them. If you don't make consistent and excessive sacrifices for a toxic family member, they may threaten to emotionally or financially distance themselves from you. These are clear signs of toxic behavior that you should be aware of.

When you try to tell them that their actions have hurt you, they also play the victim. This puts them in a problematic situation and forces you to prioritise their needs and feelings over your own. To avoid accepting responsibility for their actions, they can shift the blame onto others.

Toxic family members may interfere in your private affairs without your consent. That could take many forms, such as pressuring you to share information you don't feel comfortable sharing or surreptitiously gathering details about your life from your peers and internet activity. Although they may pretend to be intrusive because they care, it's more likely that they are doing so to gain more control over you.

## **3 Ways to Establish Limits with Toxic Family Members**

You might need to take care of your own mental health needs before you can set boundaries with toxic family members, particularly if you have co-occurring disorders like substance abuse and depression. It's important to recognize that your mental health is a priority and that you deserve to be treated with respect. With mental clarity and professional support, you can recognize the problematic behaviors and come to the realization that you don't deserve to be treated poorly.

Don't expect them to change when you set and uphold boundaries with a toxic family member. Although it would require psychological intervention,

research has shown that narcissists are not capable of feeling empathy, which would resolve many of your problems with them. You should therefore think of your boundaries as a form of self-defence.

### ***1. Locate the cut-off switch***

Consider the actions of your toxic family member that cause you to feel uneasy or unhappy. You can try to talk to them about these behaviours, but keep in mind that they might turn against you and not see your point of view. It's time to activate your cut-off switch if this is the case.

What does this signify? It means that when they start misbehaving, possibly criticizing you or trying to dictate your life decisions, you stop engaging with them. You can change the topic, but if that doesn't work, either hang up the phone or say goodbye and leave the room. This is your 'cut-off switch', a way to protect yourself from their toxic behavior.

Most of the time, they're trying to see what their actions can achieve. You can let them know that you will no longer be influenced by them by refusing to respond to or participate in these strategies.

### ***2. Give them access on your terms***

It's time to regain your privacy if a toxic family member is bothering you. This will require the willpower to not react or engage at specific times, much like figuring out your cut-off switch. Even if the toxic family member is threatening to punish you, don't open up when you don't feel comfortable doing so.

Consider deleting your toxic family member from your social media accounts and setting them to private to prevent them from having unwelcome access to your life.

You must therefore determine when you are ready to become involved in their lives, particularly if they cause a lot of turmoil or crises. You can help them only in specific situations or after your own needs have been satisfied. Until you've made more progress with your mental health, which is both legitimate and healthy, you might conclude that you can't help them at all.

### ***3. Clearly define and adhere to your boundaries***

It's crucial to let them know what your boundaries are, even if you don't expect them to alter their behaviour drastically. They must comprehend what you're doing, even if they reject or "believe" your logic.

In this manner, they may perceive a connection between their actions and your responses. It might alter how they treat you, but it might not change how they feel. When they realise their strategies aren't working, they might abandon them, which would make it much simpler for you to interact with them.

You must respect your boundaries if you want this to work. Allowing your toxic family member to cross your boundaries gives them the impression that they can still manipulate you if they put in enough effort. Even though it might be easier to give in, you must remain steadfast and resilient.

## **Know That You Are Deserving**

It can be challenging to remember that we deserve loving, caring, and reciprocal relationships when we are raised with toxic family members. However, it's important to recognize your deservingness. You have the right to be treated with respect and kindness, and you should not tolerate toxic behavior from anyone, including family members.

At [Hope Trust](#), we understand how difficult it can be to make progress on your own, particularly when it comes to relationships. Contact us now if you need help but are ready to make positive changes in your life.

Click [www.hopetrustindia.com](http://www.hopetrustindia.com) for an online appointment with a therapist.